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Spark Gap MARC

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Canada Australia eye Morse speed reduction:

Canada and Australia could follow the US in reducing the Morse Code speed examination requirement to 5 WPM for full HF access. Radio Amateurs of Canada announced plans this month to ask Industry Canada to eliminate that country's 12 WPM Morse requirement. The RAC Board of Directors has voted unanimously in favor of the proposal, expected to be filed soon, if enacted the change would leave 5 WPM as the sole Morse code examination requirement for full HF access in Canada.

Meanwhile the Wireless Institute of Australia reports seriously consider whether to push regulatory authorities to reduce the maximum Morse Code license test speed Down Under from 10 to 5 WPM. WIA says it expects to discuss the matter in detail next month with the Australian Communications Authority.

The WIA says a majority of its membership divisions appear to favor the reduction from 10 to 5 WPM in Australia. The general issue of Morse code licensing requirements is expected to be a topic for debate at the IARU Region 3 conference the WIA will host later this year. Discussion of the International Radio Regulations regarding the Morse code requirement is not expected to come up prior the World Radio communications Conference set for 2003.

A single 5 WPM Morse code requirement for HF access goes into effect April 15 as part of sweeping

rules changes.

The United Kingdom and Sweden also have adopted 5 WPM as the Morse code examination requirement for access to the full HF spectrum. The South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority is said to be poised to act on a South Africa Radio League request for a lower code speed limit theirs. Other nations have expressed interest in the issue.

The Israeli Ministry of Communications has introduced a new license with a 6 WPM Morse code requirement that gives CW-only access to HF bands. The new ticket does not include all HF bands, however..

Form 610

With a single exception the venerable FCC Form 610 now is history. The FCC phased out the documents February 16. Amateur Radio applicants now must use the Universal Licensing System forms (Form 605,606) for all purposes. There is one exception: FCC Form 610B Club Station application continues to be valid until the FCC finalizes its privatized club station call sign administration program.

PRB-1 Bill introduced in California Senate:

California has become the latest state to consider PRB-1 legislation. ARRL Southwestern Director

Fred Heyn, WA6WZO, reports Senate Bill 1714 was introduced February 23 in the California Senate.

Like a similar PRB-1 measure passed last year in Virginia's General Assembly, the California bill would require localities to accommodate Amateur Radio antennas of up to 200 feet, according to local population density.

Echoing the language of the PRB-1 limited federal preemption measure, the measure says that local ordinances regulating antenna placement, screening of height shall reasonably accommodate amateur radio antennas and shall impose the minimum regulation necessary to accomplish the legitimate purpose of the city or county.

under the proposed bill, cities or counties with population densities of 120 persons or less per square mile (according to the 1990 US Census) would not be able to restrict Amateur Radio antennas to less than 200 feet above ground. localities having population densities of greater than 120 people per square mile would not be able to restrict ham antennas to less than 75 feet above ground, in both cases, localities would not be allowed to restrict the number of support structures. The bill stipulates that reasonable and customary engineering practices be followed in erecting Amateur Radio antennas. The bill would not preclude localities from regulating amateur antennas with respect to use of screening setback and placement, and health and safety requirements. Henry credited Michael Mitchell, W6RW, with helping to get the bill introduced, and asked California amateurs and clubs to contact their state lawmakers to support the measure.

From ARRL letter

Public Service

Georgia Amateurs respond to tornado disaster:

Amateur Radio operators respond in force after tornadoes struck rural extreme southwest Georgia this week, killing at least 18 and injuring around 100 others. The storms wiped out nearly 200 houses. Georgia Section Emergency Coordinator Tom Rogers KR4OL, reports that hams from nearby communities including Moultrie and Albany turned out to help.

Twisters generated winds that exceeded 150 MPH leveling a housing development the town of Carmilla, in Mitchell County late Sunday and early Monday. The town was one of the worst-hit areas. The storm also tore roofs from houses and flattened mobile homes. The storm caught many by surprise since warnings were not issued until after residents had retired for the night.

Georgia Governor Roy Barnes declared a state of emergency in Colquitt, Grady, Mitchell and Tift counties. Georgia Emergency Management Agency reports emergency shelters have been set up in Camilla and Moultrie. The Salvation Army and the Red Cross also were involved in the recovery effort.

Shelters are open and the Georgia Baptist Hams are setting up feeding locations and assisting with the cleanup, Rogers said. An HF emergency net was established on 75 meters to coordinate activities, but the need for emergency communications was minimal since the telecommunications infrastructure was still intact.

Damage was put at \$25 million. Thousands were left without power in Georgia and elsewhere as result of the severe weather. The storm that wreaked havoc on Georgia was part of a system that also struck Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama before moving into Georgia Northeastern Florida and the Carolinas.

Enforcement

FCC affirms \$20,000 fine; Unlicensed operation continues:

The FCC has affirmed a \$20,000 fine levied on a Florida man last summer for unlicensed operation, willful and malicious interference with Amateur Radio communications, and failure to let the FCC inspect his radio equipment. The FCC January 28 Forfeiture Order gives William Flippo of Jupiter 30 days to pay up or the matter goes to the US Attorney.

Following an FCC warning notice, Flippo initially was notified of the fine last July in a notice of Apparent Liability. Hams in Florida say Flippo has thumbed his nose at the FCC and has continued to flaunt the law by interfering with local HF and repeater nets. FCC personnel from the FCC's Tampa District Office have followed up on complaints from Amateurs that Flippo-also known by his CB handle Rabbit Ears"- has regularly interfered with hams on 10 meters, 2 meters and elsewhere. The Order acknowledges that the Commission has received information on at least five occasions since the fine was levied last July indicting that Flippo continues to violate federal law.

Flippo's only response to last year's Notice of Apparent Liability was to send the FCC a copy of a one-page bankruptcy filing. The FCC was not impressed, however. In a case where an NAL has been issued and the recipient continues to engage in the same conduct, we are not inclined to adjust the forfeiture amount, even where the recipient has filed for bankruptcy protection, the Commission said.

One Jupiter area Ham who has cooperated with the FCC investigation says Flippo has been causing problems for the amateur community in his area since late 1997. He and fellow members of the Jupiter-Tequesta Repeater Group want to see the FCC take stronger stand in the case..

I want to see the guy in Jail-plain and simple-and his equipment confiscated, said the amateur, who did not want to be identified by name fearing re-

taliation. The problem is, we're all playing by the rules here, and this guy goes out and buys a radio and gets on there and does whatever he wants and brags about it.

FCC personnel from the Tampa office have visited the Jupiter area at least twice last year as a result of amateur complaints alleging malicious interference from Flippo, primarily on VHF but also on some HF amateur bands.

From ARRL letter

Power company acts on Amateur complaints:

After prodding by the FCC Pacific Gas & Electric Company says it's making headway in mitigating long-standing power-line noise complaints from several Northern California amateurs. Not all complaints have been resolved, however, and several new ones have sprung up in the interim.

The hams involved in the initial complaints had been unsuccessful getting the West Coast power company to investigate their reports of severe noise so they turned to the ARRL and the FCC for help. In late November, the FCC wrote PG&E to remind the utility of its obligation to rectify equipment problems that cause harmful interference. The FCC requested that the company correct the problems within a reasonable time and report back.

The complainants were four hams in the Los Gatos/San Jose area and another in Berkeley. ARRL Lab Supervisor Ed Hare, W1RFI-the League's point man for RF interference issues-says the League has since received reports from additional hams in PG&E's service area. Those complaints were forwarded to PG&E for resolution.

In a letter to the FCC, PG&E Manager for operations and construction Robert Lipscomb summarized progress in cleaning up the initial complaints. The work included replacing poles, guy wires, insulators, and transformers as well as installing radio television clips at one site and rerouting service drop at another. Lipscomb conceded, however that the utility still has additional work to do. PG&E personnel continue to work with Hare in re-

PG&E personnel continue to work with Hare in resolving the complaints, Hare says not all of the five hams who complained have been contacted by PG&E. One still has severe interference, he says, and another has intermittent interference. Some interference has been cleaned up, however, Lipscomb told that in at least one of the five original cases, the customer has been contacted and he is satisfied.

The FCC Part 15 rules obligate utilities and others that fall under their provision to not cause harmful interference to licensed services and to cease operating a device that's causing harmful interference upon FCC notification. The ARRL Technical Information Service offers more information on how to deal with power line interference at <http://www.arrl>. Amateurs suffering from interference believed to be emanating from power generation or transmission facilities may contact ED Hare, W1RFI, 860-594-0318; rfi@arrl.org.

From ARRL letter

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Lyndal Cook, SK

Field Day was a special day for Lyndal Cook. As a long time amateur radio operator, W9LNX could always be counted on to wire the Field Day site with inverted V's or double bazookas. Even as a seventy year old, he would be the first to throw a ladder up against the building at Camp Atterbury and scale the one story building with a hand full of copper wire. All the fancy beams and vertical antennas never seemed to perform as well as Lyndal's wire antennas. Lyndal often reminisced about field days. For him it was time to join with fellow hams and put the wires HF rigs and CW keys to work. When he called CQ things began to happen. He never seemed to be surprised by the call signs answering his challenge. For a devoted operator like Lyndal Cook, many of those people on the other end were long time friends in a far away place. Lyndal Cook will be missed by members of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club. But one thing remains, his love for Field Day and the challenge to be the best in the country on a hot summer day in June each year. March 1, 2000, at age 79, Lyndal J. Cook became a silent key. He is survived by his wife Evelyn Doris Warrell Cook, children Darrell Lin, Cynthia Dianne Cook and a granddaughter.

W9LNX-SK

By WB1SH

WA9RDF-10 DIGIPEATER

If you are into APRS help has arrived. After several weeks of testing the WA9RDF-10 Digipeater is up and running from the EOC radio room. APRS (automatic position reporting system) is designed to send and receive small packets of information showing your longitude and latitude and a selected icon for your station. Some stations even send weather data. It's like having your own local weather network. The new WA9RDF-10 digipeater will make it easier for low power stations in Johnson County to send and receive the necessary information to the wide area network stations. As a registered Digipeater the station is listed on the state and national network. It's another way of showing that the Mid-State ARC is active in Johnson County. To participate all you need is a 2-meter radio and TNC (terminal node controller). Mobile stations will have a GPS receiver that feeds the lat/longs to the TNC and radio.

The WA9RDF-10 base station is capable of tracking mobile APRS stations during severe weather and special events. Check the EOC computer for a demonstration. For further information see Jack Parker, WB1SH

<XMP>

By WB1SH

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

Membership

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is based in Franklin, Indiana. Membership is open to all amateur radio operators and other interested parties.

Club meetings are conducted on the third Saturday of month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, IN.

Membership dues are \$18.00 per year for full members. Other types of memberships are available.

Amateur Radio Operator License testing is offered following the club meeting during the months of March through November.

The club maintains an open repeater on the 2-meter band at 146.835 MHz. Each full member has access to the repeater and autopatch.

Membership dues payments and change of address should be mailed to the club Treasurer at the address listed below.

Newsletter

The Spark Gap is the monthly club newsletter. Articles and information that would be of interest to the club members are welcome. Information may be submitted by E-mail or by mailing to the club address listed below.

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